

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A software licensing system comprising: a licensing terminal for storing a license menu which includes information on a function, a term and a number of times and the like for which usage may be approved for a software that is subject to usage approval; and a user terminal capable of accessing the license menu via a communications line;

wherein when the licensing terminal creates and sends to the user terminal a pass containing information on the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which usage is to be approved based on an agreement/selection by the user terminal, the user terminal then sends, to the software for which usage approval is to be given, a run-approval or a run-disapproval command data according to information on the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like contained in the received pass, and the user terminal then becomes able to use the software according to the content of the usage approval in the pass created by the license terminal.

2. A software licensing system according to claim 1,

wherein the pass given to the user terminal contains a pass status data indicating the current validity of the function, the term and the number of times of use and other such usage approval content, and then in the case where the pass status data of the

pass received from the user terminal is "Valid", the licensing terminal creates and sends to the user terminal a portable pass which contains information on the functions, the term and the number of times and the like for which use has been approved based on the agreement/selection by said user terminal and the pass status data indicating the current validity of this usage approval content, said portable pass being capable of being moving to another user terminal other than said user terminal; and at said other user terminal it is possible, based on the portable pass which has been moved from the first user terminal, to use the same software as the software that has already been used at the first user terminal.

3. A software licensing system according to claim 2,

wherein when the user terminal receives the portable pass, it changes the pass status data of the pass to "Currently Being Moved", and sends run-prohibition command data to the software which has already been usage-approved to thereby makes the software unusable.

4. A software licensing system according to claim 2 or claim 3,

wherein in the case where the pass status data of the portable pass received from the other user terminal is "Currently Being Moved", the licensing terminal creates a new pass and sends this to the other user terminal; and the other user terminal sends, to said software, run command data in accordance with information on

the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like which was included in the new pass, to thereby make it possible for the other user terminal to use said software.

5. A software licensing system according to claim 4, wherein when the other user terminal receives the new pass, it changes the pass status data of said portable pass to "Invalid", to thereby invalidate the portable pass.

6. A software licensing terminal comprising: a means for storing the license menu which includes the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which usage may be approved for the software that is subject to usage approval; a means for creating a pass containing the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which usage is approved based on the agreement/selection by the user terminal that is connected via a communications line; and a means for sending the pass to the user terminal via the communications line.

7. A computer program wherein, by means of a control means of a licensing terminal which can connect via a communications line to the user terminal that uses the software for which usage approval has been given and which stores a license menu containing the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which usage may be approved for said software, said computer program executes the processing for:

(a) sending to the user terminal a license menu that pertains

to said software;

(b) receiving agreement/selection data that contains information on the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like that the user terminal agreed/selected from the license menu, and creating the pass that contains information on the function, the usage period and the like for which usage is to be approved for said software, based on said agreement/selection data; and

(c) sending the pass to the user terminal.

8. A user terminal comprising: a means for connecting, via a communications line, to a licensing terminal that stores a licensing menu which includes the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which usage may be approved with respect to the software for which usage approved is to be given; a means for receiving from the licensing terminal a pass containing the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like which were agreed/selected from the license menu; and a means for sending, to said software, run-approval or run-disapproval command data according to information on the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like contained in the received pass.

9. A computer program wherein, by means of a control means of a user terminal that can connect via a communications line to a licensing terminal which stores a license menu containing the function, the term and the number of times and the like for which

the usage may be approved regarding said software to be usage-approved, said computer program executes the processing for:

(a) creating the agreement/selection data that contains information on the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like which were agreed/selected from the license menu; and

(b) receiving from the licensing terminal a pass which contains the function, the usage period and the like for which usage was approved for said software based on said agreement/selection data and sending, to said software, a run-approval or run-disapproval command data in accordance with information on the function, the term and the number of times of use and the like contained in the received pass.